

## **News from Wilmington Mayor James M. Baker and United States Attorney Colm F. Connolly**

Wilmington Mayor James M. Baker and United States Attorney for Delaware Colm F. Connolly today announced the establishment of a legal fellowship to ensure that the highly successful Federal Enforcement and Detention/Urban Policing Program, also known by the acronym FED UP, will continue for another year. FED UP is a joint Federal, State and City law enforcement initiative that began last February to help reduce the number of guns and the number of shootings in Wilmington.

FED UP removed 50 felons with guns from the streets of Wilmington during the first year of the program. Homicides committed with a gun in Wilmington dropped 37% during that period, from 16 in 2006 to 10 in 2007.

To enhance the prosecutorial resources necessary to sustain FED UP, the Mayor and U.S. Attorney have created a Federal Enforcement and Detention/Urban Policing Fellowship, whereby the City will provide \$75,000 to a lawyer selected by the U.S. Attorney's Office to serve as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney to prosecute FED UP cases.

U.S. Attorney Connolly said his office is now accepting resumes from interested attorneys who would like to work directly on existing and future FED UP cases. Resumes should be sent to David Weiss, First Assistant U.S. Attorney. Interested applicants may call the U.S. Attorney's Office at 302.573.6277.

Under the FED UP Program, all adult felons who are found in possession of firearms by the Wilmington Police Department are immediately detained in federal custody pending an initial appearance before a federal magistrate. At the defendant's initial appearance in federal court, the United States Attorney's Office moves for the detention of the defendant pending indictment and trial. In effect, the United States Attorney's Office is serving as the local prosecutor for all felon-in-possession cases in Wilmington.

According to the U.S. Attorney Connolly, of the 50 FED UP cases handled by his office since February of 2007, 21 have been resolved resulting in 20 guilty pleas for a 95% conviction rate. Connolly said those convicted received prison sentences averaging approximately three years.

Mayor Baker said the FED UP Program has been extremely helpful to the City's crime fighting efforts lead by the Wilmington Police Department. "We are grateful to have this type of extra focus and prosecution on the small minority of citizens who choose to continue their criminal ways," said the Mayor. "FED UP has removed them and their weapons from the streets in remarkable numbers. We look forward to continuing this relationship with U.S. Attorney Connolly which benefits everyone who lives, works and is trying to prosper in Wilmington."

U.S. Attorney Connolly stated: "We are pleased with the success of FED UP and thrilled that the Mayor has offered to fund this fellowship to provide our office with a full-time prosecutor. Both my office and the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms place a high value on our partnership with the City's Police Department and Mayor's Office."

Operation FED UP is an extension of Operation Disarm, a state-wide effort launched in December 2001, which has increased federal firearms prosecutions by more than 200%. Both Operation Disarm and FED UP are part of the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods, a nationwide commitment to reduce gun crime in America by facilitating partnerships among federal, state, and local authorities.

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